



# STEFAN I. MYCHAJLIW

## ERIE COUNTY COMPTROLLER

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Contact – Office of Erie County Comptroller at [Comptroller@Erie.gov](mailto:Comptroller@Erie.gov), or 716.858.8400

## WALL STREET GIVES HIGH MARKS TO MANAGEMENT OF ERIE COUNTY FINANCES

*Independent ratings agency points to county's fiscal management in affirming AA- credit rating*

**(Buffalo)** – Erie County Comptroller Stefan I. Mychajliw Jr. announced today that Wall Street ratings agency Kroll Bond Rating Agency (KBRA) has affirmed Erie County's AA- credit rating. This marks the third straight year Erie County has received this strong credit rating. The Office of Erie County Comptroller, under the authority given by the Erie County Charter, is solely responsible for cash management and accounting policies.

"I'm thrilled to have maintained our strong credit rating. Our team does a great job in ensuring the fiscal health of Erie County. I'm very proud of the work our managers and union employees do. My office worked incredibly hard throughout this pandemic to preserve our strong financial footing," said Comptroller Mychajliw.

In affirming Erie County's fiscal standing, KBRA said the AA- rating "reflects the County's strong governance structure, historically favorable unassigned fund balance, sound budgeting practices, and manageable fixed-cost burden." KBRA also cited the Comptroller's deficit declaration in 2020. That declaration triggered a plan of action in preparing for what amounted to a 4.8% decline in general fund revenues in fiscal year 2020 from the prior year.

"We knew challenges were on the horizon. I didn't hide from this challenge. Faced it head on. We knew the best course of action was to declare the deficit in order to adjust expectations. As a result, lawmakers then properly prepared for a situation where sales tax revenue was unlikely to meet projections. While some left leaning lawmakers played partisan politics and complained about my deficit declaration, Wall Street affirmed it was the right call on my part," said Comptroller Mychajliw.

The stable outlook reflects KBRA's expectation that the county will not experience major or prolonged pandemic driven setbacks. It also noted the availability of significant stimulus funding and cost control measures allowed for some budget flexibility. The agency also noted a consistent record of stable general fund unassigned fund balance in excess of the 5% charter requirement.

KBRA did note that Erie County is too reliant on sales tax revenues to fund operations, which Erie County Comptroller Stefan Mychajliw has been warning about for years. Still, the agency noted strong fiscal management and budgetary controls in maintaining its rating.

"I've long said Erie County lawmakers need to be less reliant on sales tax revenues to fund the county budget. Having said that, the fact that this independent ratings agency recognized my stewardship of taxpayer dollars is very important. I'm proud of our strong financial management," concluded Comptroller Mychajliw.